

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please AMEND the claims and ADD new claims as indicated below:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A wavelength characteristic variable filter comprising:  
a filter that is arranged in a path of a collimated beam and having a diffraction unit that is movable in a direction substantially perpendicular to a direction of the collimated beam, wherein the filter has first and second filter portions with the diffraction unit between the first and second filter portions, and the collimated beam hits the first and second filter portions and the diffraction unit so that the filter provides a transmittance versus wavelength characteristic in which a  
~~wavelength characteristic of the filter is such that a transmittance~~ of the filter changes with wavelength; and

a moving unit that moves the diffraction unit to thereby change the transmittance versus wavelength characteristic of the filter.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The wavelength characteristic variable filter according to claim 1, wherein the first and second filter portions are made of film formed on a surface of the filter, and the diffraction unit is a slit formed between the first and second filter portions and having a pair of edges, wherein the slit is formed by removing a part of a film from a the surface of the filter.

3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The wavelength characteristic variable filter according to claim 2, further comprising: wherein  
a plurality of the filters ~~are~~ arranged in the path of the collimated beam, and wherein the moving unit moves all or some of the slits simultaneously.

4. (ORIGINAL) The wavelength characteristic variable filter according to claim 3, wherein the slits of adjoining filters make a predetermined angle with each other.

5. (ORIGINAL) The wavelength characteristic variable filter according to claim 3, wherein the moving unit moves all the slits in one direction or moves each slit in a respective direction.

6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The wavelength characteristic variable filter according to claim 1, wherein the filter has a plurality of the diffraction units and a plurality of filter

portions, the diffraction units ~~are~~ have first and second edges, and the first and second edges are formed at a pitch of 1/4 or less of a beam diameter of the collimated beam, and each diffraction unit is formed between two filter portions with one of the filter portions adjacent to the first edge of the respective diffraction unit and the other of the filter portions adjacent to the second edge of the respective diffraction unit.

7. (ORIGINAL) The wavelength characteristic variable filter according to claim 1, wherein the moving unit moves the diffraction unit by using any one of an electromagnetic force driving mechanism, a thermal expansion driving mechanism, a piezoelectric effect driving mechanism, and an electrostatic force driving mechanism, or a combination thereof.

8. (ORIGINAL) The wavelength characteristic variable filter according to claim 3, wherein the filters have different wavelength characteristics.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The wavelength characteristic variable filter according to claim 1, wherein the first and second filter portions a-are reflection type filter ~~filters is used as the filter~~, and a direction from which light enters in the first and second filter portions ~~reflection type filter~~ and a direction towards which light is emitted out from the ~~reflection type filter~~ first and second filter portions are ~~same~~ parallel.

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The wavelength characteristic variable filter according to claim 2, wherein the filter is an etalon filter in which the first and second filter portions are film and the diffraction unit is formed by the edges ~~made in the~~ are formed on one portion of a reflection film.

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An ~~apparatus~~ optical amplifier comprising: an optical amplifier including

a filter that is arranged in a path of a collimated beam and having ~~an edge~~ a diffraction unit that is movable in a direction substantially perpendicular to a direction of the collimated beam, wherein the filter has first and second filter portions with the diffraction unit between the first and second filter portions, and the collimated beam hits the first and second filter portions and the diffraction unit so that the filter provides a transmittance versus wavelength characteristic in which a wavelength characteristic of

~~the filter is such that a transmittance of the filter~~ with respect to a wavelength is set; and  
a moving unit that moves the ~~edge~~ diffraction unit of the filter to a predetermined position between a center and an edge of the collimated beam to thereby change the transmittance versus wavelength characteristic of the filter.

12. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An optical communications apparatus comprising:  
a filter that is arranged in a path of a collimated beam and having ~~an edge~~ a diffraction unit that is movable in a direction substantially perpendicular to a direction of the collimated beam, wherein the filter has first and second filter portions with the diffraction unit between the first and second filter portions, and the collimated beam hits the first and second filter portions and the diffraction unit so that the filter provides a transmittance versus wavelength characteristic in which ~~a wavelength characteristic of the filter is such that a transmittance of the filter~~ with respect to a wavelength is set; and  
a moving unit that moves the ~~edge~~ diffraction unit of the filter to a predetermined position between a center and an edge of the collimated beam.

13. (NEW) An apparatus comprising:  
a filter positioned in a path of a collimated light, the filter comprising first and second film portions with a slit between the first and second film portions so that the collimated light hits the first and second film portions and the slit, and diffraction of the collimated light by the slit in combination with characteristics of the first and second film portions causes the filter to thereby have a transmittance versus wavelength characteristic in which transmittance of the filter changes with wavelength; and  
a moving unit moving the filter so that the slit moves substantially perpendicular to a travel direction of the collimated light to thereby change the transmittance versus wavelength characteristic of the filter.

14. (NEW) An apparatus according to claim 13, further comprising:  
a plurality of the filters arranged in the path of the collimated light, wherein the moving unit moves all or some of the filters simultaneously to thereby change a combined transmittance versus wavelength characteristic of the filters.

15. (NEW) An apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the slits of adjoining filters make a predetermined angle with each other.

16. (NEW) An apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the moving unit moves all or some of the filters so that all the slits of the moved filters move in one direction or so that the slit of each respective filter moves in a respective direction.